

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1046

As Reported by House Committee On:
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to the public safety and education account.

Brief Description: Limiting the use of the public safety and education account.

Sponsors: Representative Sommers; by request of Office of Financial Management.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 1/24/05, 2/14/05 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Eliminates the Public Safety and Education Account (PSEA).
- Redirects revenue deposited in the PSEA to the State General Fund.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Buri, Clements, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Dunshee, Grant, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDermott, McIntire, Miloscia, Pearson, Schual-Berke, Talcott and Walsh.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong and Priest.

Staff: Nona Snell (786-7153).

Background:

The Public Safety and Education Account (PSEA) was created in 1984. Allowable uses for the account include highway safety, criminal justice training, crime victims' compensation, judicial education, and the judicial information system. The largest source of revenue deposited into the account is traffic infraction penalties. Total projected expenditures from the PSEA for the 2003-2005 biennium are \$186,580,000.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Public Safety and Education Account is eliminated. Revenue previously deposited in the account will be deposited in the State General Fund. Certain bond interest and principal payments previously paid from the PSEA will be made from the debt-limit general fund retirement account.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The original bill redirected revenue deposited in the PSEA to the State General Fund but retained the PSEA for purposes of paying certain annual bond interest and principal payments.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect July 1, 2005.

Testimony For: None.

(With concerns) To protect the smaller programs, they may need to be included in budget provisos because they have not always competed well with other programs within the PSEA and other accounts.

In 1997 there were seven entities that received PSEA funds. In 1992, 14 entities received PSEA funds, and the number of programs funded has continued to grow.

In the early 1980's, the state auditor asked for the PSEA to replace several accounts with specific uses to simplify the tracking of funds. The PSEA was originally designed to mirror the existing split between state and local government revenues and to give the Legislature the authority to appropriate from the account rather than having several dedicated accounts. Since then, the uses of the account expanded beyond its means, and the simple distribution formula has become complex and confusing.

Instead of doing away with the account, study the revenue sources and uses to restore the account to its original purpose, which was criminal justice and public safety.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (With concerns) Debbie Wilke, Washington Association of County Officials; and Lonnie Johns-Brown, Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs.

(Comments) Janet McLane, Administrative Office of the Courts.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.